

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Thank you for your leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, May in the State of Minnesota is a time for celebration, as thousands of boats are de-winterized and dropped in a lake at a public access. It's time to think about walleyes, getting ready to hop into the boat on Saturday morning, whether it be at Lake Mille Lacs, Lake Winnibigoshish, or a local well-kept secret. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has complicated these plans for many throughout Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District and statewide.

Regardless of where, Minnesota's 2020 Fishing Opener Weekend's time to drop a line in the water in the land of 10,000 lakes is fast approaching, and your recent guidance for opening up businesses related to outdoor recreation is much appreciated. However, it is crucial you issue further guidance ahead of Saturday's fishing opener to allow the use of overnight campsites.

Although we find ourselves in an unprecedented global pandemic, Minnesotans still have the right to fish. Fishing license purchases are up 41% from this time last year. With such an uptick, our fishermen and women will need everything that comes with a license: new line for the reel, gas for the two-stroke, and a place to stay near the lake.

Minnesotans hold generational traditions of awaking early near the shores of their favorite fishing destination and launching their boat before that morning bite hits. When camping, Minnesotans naturally socially distance. With the inclusion of RV resorts and rented cabins in the guidance, it is commonsense to include traditional tented campsites. Furthermore, many Minnesotans cannot afford an RV or rented cabin, but a local campsite is just what their family needs right now to get out, enjoy the weather, and catch the bounty of fish our beautiful state offers. I believe we need to ensure that outdoor recreation is available to all income levels and areas, not just those with a cabin, RV, or resort reservation.

Folks can fish all day and return to their campsite while keeping a proper social distance from their neighbors. Having a beverage around a campfire with a shore lunch walleye dinner is a tradition older than Minnesota itself.

Many of our local businesses are reliant on open campsites and outdoor recreation. Folks will need to purchase supplies in rural gas stations and retail locations, which can certainly be done while practicing social distancing. Therefore, I urge you to issue further guidance allowing for Minnesotans to access overnight campsites ahead of this weekend's Fishing Opener.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber

Member of Congress
Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District